

Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council (General Agency):

The **State Rehabilitation Council** – is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act) and 34 CFR 361.16-361.17 of its implementing regulations.

South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council was created in South Dakota codified law, Section 1-36A-5 and termed as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation**.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation's Annual Report of Activities for Fiscal Year 2006 reflects the following:

- ✓ The **State Rehabilitation Council** - known in South Dakota as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** – gives advice to and works in partnership with the vocational rehabilitation agency in South Dakota - **Division of Rehabilitation Services**.
- ✓ The **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** – plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively.
- ✓ The **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** works in partnership with the **Division of Rehabilitation Services** in developing policies, planning activities, evaluating program effectiveness and carrying out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program.
- ✓ The working relationship between the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** and the **Division of Rehabilitation Services** is a true partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities

receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and the State's open meeting laws, SDCL 1-25-1, the Board holds quarterly meetings at a minimum. These meetings are open to the public and held in various locations statewide. Meetings held during the report period included:

June 16, 2006 in Pierre
September 26-26, 2006 in Pierre
December 11-12, 2006 in Sioux Falls
March 22-23, 2007 in Rapid City

Summary of Input and Recommendations:

- Staff support agreement for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council was re-negotiated. The Chairperson of both the Board and Council submitted a letter to the provider, which indicated they were pleased with the provision of staff support.
- There was consensus among the Board and Division to host a meeting with the RSA State Liaison in conjunction with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council. This meeting was held in conjunction with the Board's June meeting.
- The Board agreed to coordinate its solicitation process for nominations with that of the Statewide Independent Living Council. Nominees were submitted to the Governor's Office for his review and action along with the names of members who were interested in serving a second term. Appointments were made and as a result the Board has met all the composition requirements as required by the Rehabilitation Act.

- The recommendation of having “Order of Selection” as an agenda item predates this reporting period. Order of Selection was deemed necessary and the State Plan Preprint was changed to reflect this. The public meetings held in 2006 had the implementation of the Order of Selection as a focus area. Division staff have reported to the Board throughout the year regarding the implementation process, financial resources, expenditures, and staff training. This item has been a primary focus of discussion and brainstorming for the Board and Division, and it will continue to be so.

- Recommendation to have the following items on the Board’s meeting agendas: Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel Beneficiary Summit, Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization, Year End Results Performance Indicators, Medicaid Assistance for Workers with Disabilities, Fair Hearing Decision, RSA Annual Review Report and Monitoring Review, and United We Ride. In addition, the Board has requested periodic updates on the following: Statewide Independent Living Council, Workforce Development Council, Freedom to Work, SD Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program, Youth Leadership Forum and Teacher Institute training.

- At the Board’s December meeting the Division presented the Year End Results data. This information included: summary of all cases, analysis of successful closures, analysis of supported employment, Project Skills, summary of SSA recovery, fiscal analysis, summary of consumer satisfaction survey, and analysis of evaluation standards. A request was made to have this on the next meeting’s agenda for follow-up discussion, which would provide members the time to review the information and formulate any questions.

- A request was made following the Freedom to Work Project Update to have periodic updates on two areas: the Employer Resource Network and Career Development Team. This involves relationship building and problem solving with employers, human resource

managers, private providers, vocational rehabilitation staff and consumers who are interested in employment.

- Statewide Needs Assessment Planning Process was added as a “standing agenda item” after the RSA On-Site Visit. This agenda item would include continual discussion of outcomes and evaluations as it relates to the goals and objectives of the State Plan.
- The Board wrote a letter of support for the SD Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (SDWIPA) grant application. SDWIPA is a critical element in South Dakota’s overall strategy for implementation of both the Ticket to Work Incentives Improvement Act and Workforce Investment Act with outlined objectives to improve employment and economic outcomes for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries.
- Discussion and review of the public meetings held in April and May of 2006 led to assigning the Consumer Services Committee with the task of identifying strategies to hosting public meetings. The discussion included involving the South Dakota’s Freedom to Work Project because this is also a priority for them. At the June meeting, committee recommendations were made to host two public meetings: one in conjunction with a training event and one with a “job club”.
- The ‘State Plan Submission Process’ has been on various agendas throughout this reporting period. The Consumer Services Committee is assigned the task of reviewing draft attachments and providing recommendations to the full Board. During the March and June meetings, members had the opportunity to provide comment and submit further recommendations prior to the submittal date.
- During the June meeting, the Division requested that the Board consider a full re-write of the State Plan Document. This was assigned to the Consumer Services Committee and they agreed to initiate this process.

- This committee met face-to-face in September, November and January to work on the goals, objectives and activities of the State Plan. Information reviewed but not limited to: public meeting comments, consumer satisfaction survey results, case file review summary, Survey of South Dakota People Challenged by Disability, Department of Transportation statistical report, Freedom to Work Survey Report, and MidWinter Conference brainstorming outcomes.
- The committee identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Division, which developed the framework for the goals, and objectives of the agency.
- Following each committee meeting an update was provided to the full Board. The committee has been given Board and Division approval to proceed with the task before them, knowing what the committee was preparing would be utilized in the preparation of the re-write of the State Plan document.
- Division staff shared information regarding the Consumer Satisfaction Survey with the Board at the June meeting. The survey instrument was developed several years ago and the Consumer Services Committee recommended that it be reviewed this next reporting cycle; the full Board concurred.
- During this reporting period the Board approved funds to support the following: National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities, Governor's Awards Luncheon, public meetings, employer seminar, and individual or organizational requests. In addition, the Board approved funds for two consumers to participate in training activities, which will assist them in making informed choices regarding employment.
- Throughout the year the Consumer Services Committee is asked to review and provide comment on draft policies and program guides.

The committee reviewed the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Program Guide and provided comment to the Division. The full Board had the opportunity to submit further comment on the program guide, in addition to it being made available on the Division's website for further public comment.

- An update on the Order of Selection was provided during the March meeting. Members asked if the Division could develop a follow-up survey, which would be disseminated to those on the waiting list. Board members were interested in consumer's responses to items such as: consumer's understanding of the waiting list; did the referral listing provide assistance; which sources of information were helpful; were they able to find employment, etc.
- During the March 2007 meeting, the draft State Plan attachments were reviewed with the full Board. The Consumer Services Committee agreed to meet again face-to-face to review the attachments in April. The Division also asked the committee to review the mission statement to ensure it is consistent with the goals and priorities of the agency.
- The Public Awareness Committee's funding recommendations for hosting the 2007 National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities were approved by the full board. The Division agreed to provide financial assistance, if it was needed.
- During the March 2007 meeting, a motion was made to publicly acknowledge and thank the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired for their partnership and financial support with various activities which promote the employment of people with disabilities.
- The Board also agreed to write a thank you note to an individual for her work which was instrumental in obtaining legislative support for a bill which addressed People First Language to make South Dakota a

more inclusive community. The bill was defeated but a concurrent resolution was passed.